

Editorial

General Issue

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Welcome to this second issue of *Virtual Creativity*. The journal continues to change and expand under its new title, and it is interesting to note that, in this general issue, the many applications of technology – in art, in design, in humanities and in science – their impact (in the visual, within ritual, in outer space and even within the soil) continues to be felt in all aspects of our digital and non-digital lives. As a result, there are a range of themes presented in this issue.

The first two articles are engaged in what is termed by both authors as the ‘post-digital’. In ‘Exploring the networked image in “post” art practices’ Garrett Lynch presents a body of research that explores the networked image in relation to a number of ‘post’ art practices. Through a series of four durational, networked performances undertaken since 2013, he questions media and form through what he terms post-media, post-photographic, post-digital, post-internet and post-screen practices. Jeremiah Ambrose, in ‘Systems of seeing: Virtual gaze interaction’ seeks to define and contextualise the most dominant form of perceptual interaction in virtual reality through an exploration of a creative application of an interactive 360° film. Echoing the approach of Lynch, he notes that as the discourse of digital artistic practice is shifting from digital to post-digital, a central concern of virtual reality is the disembodiment it generates. He goes on to establish a historiography and associated praxis for virtual gaze interaction through an engagement in the politics of vision, and presents a framework for digital futures pertaining to ocular interactions in media art

and beyond. The third article, '3D technology as an effective tool for reflection simulation: The Beagle 2 lander on Mars' by Kuzmanova, Higgett, Sims, and Tatham takes on an entirely different subject, that of the landing (or not) of Beagle 2 on Mars in December 2003. After failing to communicate with Earth, the mission was presumed lost until an object was captured by NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) two years later on the surface of Mars. In the light of these findings and the uncertainty still surrounding the outcome of the mission, a group of space scientists and digital designers collaborated to employ the innovative concept of 'reflection analysis' to determine if the 2015 Mars satellite images were of Beagle 2.

In 'Ritual and digital technology' Minso Kim reconsiders Walter Benjamin's celebrated contention in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) and rather than the disappearance of aura and ritual she argues that, in the era of digital technology, mass reproduction actually helps aura to exist and in turn leads to the creation of new ritual phenomena. She cites examples including the phenomenon of 1990s Korean popular culture, fan fiction, and 'after school programs' incorporating K-pop, and argues they are enabling digital spaces to produce and foster new forms of ritual via online artworks. The final article in this issue is compellingly titled 'Crafting virtual reality', in which Lynne Heller describes, illustrates and theorizes the creation of a virtual reality (VR) landscape/game/sojourn, entitled *One for Sorrow* (2018). Whilst structured as a first-person puzzle game, the experience uses the old nursery rhyme *One for Sorrow* to entice the player to explore and discover, not necessarily mixed realities, but rather, mixed sensibilities – 2D/3D, hand/algorithm, drawn/photographic. Digital and handmade aesthetics, coupled with considered sound design and narrative, can evoke an immersive experience and

provide an unorthodox model for VR art. Heller describes the making process as a way to position and trouble the translation of the handmade into the digital using collage, assemblage and montage.

As Heller juxtaposes the digital and the handmade, designer and artist Kasia Molga presents, in her visual essay 'By the code of soil', a speculative story about organic intelligence (OI). It is 2050 and soil has become the most precious element of our biosphere. AI software interpreting the soil moisture data had a glitch of some sort, and part of it is distributed over the network to all networked devices – our personal computers, corporate databases and servers. The OI became like a computer virus stopping all networked devices once a day at the same time in order to hear the 'song of the soil'. Molga was commissioned by the GROW Observatory (a European community of citizen growers, gardeners, small scale farmers, scientists and policy makers, who contribute data on local soil conditions and land cover), funded through the EU's Horizon 2020 research programme, to create two projects dealing with soils' conditions, soil moisture data and growers' farming practices.

I would like to thank all of the contributors to this fascinating issue and the journal reviewers who have enabled the work to be developed and expanded upon in such interesting ways.

I would like to both welcome and thank Dr Lynne Heller for agreeing to undertake the newly created role of Reviews Editor for the journal. Lynne will bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and networks to this role and I am sure will make a significant impact on the range of discussions that will come from developing this

new section of the journal. It is important to note the pulses, the conversations, and the emerging discussions in the related conferences, books and other events around the globe. In this very first set of reviews a range of events, conferences and symposiums are included. We were very pleased that artist, curator, and educator Nina Czegledy agreed to write two reviews for this issue, one from ISEA 2019 in Durban, Africa (the very first ISEA to be held on African soil), and the second review from the very first FEMeeting in Lisbon, Portugal, bringing together women active in the fields of Art, Science, and Technology. The third review is of the 4th Seminar of Digital Arts, which took place in April 2018 in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

On completing this editorial, I received the good news that *Virtual Creativity* is now included in SCOPUS (Elsevier's abstract and citation database). This will further extend the impact of the journal and encourage colleagues from around the world to publish with us and contribute to the development of this fast-changing field. Finally, we are looking to develop the global reach of the journal even further and are therefore seeking colleagues who could join us as Associate Editors from across the globe. Please get in touch with us if you think you and your network could support, in particular, contributions from South Asia, South East Asia, Australasia, Africa, and Central and South America.